

**26 January 2005**

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Press Release

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## HILARY BENN PLEDGES £1 BILLION TO BOOST HEALTH CARE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Hilary Benn the Secretary of State for International Development (DFID) today announced that the UK will pledge almost £1 billion (US\$1.8 billion) over 15 years to help immunise children and adults in the world's poorest countries.

The money will be for the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) for an International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm). This will raise an additional US\$4 billion over the next 10 years and this extra funding will it is estimated save an additional five million lives and so contribute to the goal of reducing by two-thirds the death rate for under-five year olds and reduce by three-quarter the maternal mortality rate.

Every year 10 million infants and children under-five die from illnesses such as diarrhoea, malaria and measles – diseases that can be treated effectively through immunisation and basic health care. Thirty million children go unimmunised each year.

Hilary Benn said: "Every year up to three million children die from diseases that could be prevented by vaccines that are available now or could be in the near future. Immunisation is one of the cheapest ways of saving lives. DFID's pledge to the International Finance Facility for Immunisation will help provide sustainable finance for more immunisation. I would encourage other countries to support this scheme and help save the lives of future generations."

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More than one in four of the world's population live in extreme poverty. Governments worldwide have agreed to work together to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, and to other targets including universal primary education and improved healthcare. The British Government is strongly committed to these targets.

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### Notes to Editors

1. The UK's contribution will be £960 million over 15 years.
2. The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) was launched in January 2000 to help the world's poorest countries achieve internationally agreed immunisation goals. Between 2000-2005 the UK gave £35 million to GAVI and proposes to contribute the same amount to core funding over the next three years.
3. The International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) is a pilot for the International Finance Facility (IFF). The IFF will raise extra money to fight poverty through the securitisation of additional aid commitments from donors by selling bonds in the international capital markets. It will make large amounts of money immediately available for the poorest countries.
4. The aim of the IFFIm is to achieve a fund of at least US\$4 billion to be spent over 10 years. DFID is proposing to provide about one third of this, with the French Government and other donors making up the rest.
5. The Department For International Development (DFID) is the UK Government department responsible for promoting sustainable development and reducing poverty around the world. The central focus of the Government's policy is a commitment to the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015. The Millennium Development Goals are:
  - a. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
  - b. Achieve universal primary education
  - c. Promote gender equality and empower women
  - d. Reduce child mortality
  - e. Improve maternal health
  - f. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
  - g. Ensure environmental sustainability
  - h. Develop a global partnership for development
6. For more information please contact the DFID press office on 020 7023 0600 or [pressoffice@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@dfid.gov.uk)

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